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TO : EUR - Mr. Ivan B. White

DATE: October 9, 1959

FROM : GHR - Martin J. Hillenbrand

SUBJECT: Preparation of Substantive Position on Berlin for Next Meeting
With Soviets

On the assumption that, despite deGaulle's apparent opposition, we are moving towards a Summit meeting with the Soviets at which the Berlin question will have to be discussed, we should now begin the process of developing a Western substantive position. As I understand it, the Secretary envisages that discussion at the Summit on Berlin will be in very general terms, with the heads of Governments issuing a directive to their Foreign Ministers or Deputy Foreign Ministers to meet at some later date to work out the details of a settlement. Such a directive would, however, presumably have to contain enough in the way of substantive guidance to make it essential that the Western powers have a firmly developed position on Berlin before they enter a Summit meeting so that such a directive can be shaped in accordance with their objectives. There is also the possibility, of course, that Khrushchev will attempt to launch a detailed discussion of Berlin at the Summit under such circumstances that it might not be possible to stay on the level of generalities..

An initial question is whether the Western Powers will be prepared to discuss the Berlin question in isolation or will, as they did at the beginning of the Geneva Conference, continue to attempt to place it within the framework of a general German settlement. After the presentation of the Western peace plan at Geneva, it quickly became apparent that any discussion of German reunification would be completely check-mated by Soviet insistence on discussing a peace treaty with Germany, or with "two Germanies", and the Foreign Ministers thereafter moved on to a discussion of the Berlin question by itself. A number of Germans, most notably Willy Brandt, have recently emphasized the undesirability of having the forthcoming discussions with the Soviets on Berlin outside of the framework of the German problem as a whole. The Western Powers can, of course, continue to point out that the reunification of Germany provides the only real and lasting solution of the Berlin problem. The question is whether, realistically considered and given the agreement embodied in the Camp David communique, they can continue to insist on four-power discussion of the reunification issue. at the Summit.

A basic decision which the Western Powers will have to make before entering a Summit meeting is whether they desire to proceed along the lines of the final Western proposal on Berlin of July 28, that is, to propose a standstill for an agreed period of years during which certain adjustments might be made in Berlin but at the conclusion of which negotiations on Berlin would resume with the legal position of each party substantially unimpaired. I gather

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that the President's thinking apparently goes somewhat beyond this; in any event we will require guidance as to his views at a fairly early point.

The only alternative to the July 28 approach, it would appear (with the possible exception of the fallback proposal in the London Working Group Report of April 1959), is some proposal which would have the effect of altering to a greater or lesser extent the present occupation regime in West Berlin. A number of such proposals have been considered in the past, and various combinations of these are possible emphasizing one feature or another. Refinements of these proposals in terms of the current situation can be made, but it is obvious that eventual sponsorship of any of them by the West would involve a major policy decision as well as a considerable task of persuasion vis-a-vis the Germans and probably the French.

As to the procedure to be followed in developing the Western position, this depends partly on the kind of proposal which the United States decides to sponsor. At this juncture lengthy Working Group sessions of the type which we had last winter and spring hardly seem required. However, a preparatory meeting of some days' duration at the experts level before a Western Summit will probably be essential. Our estimate of the needs in this field will become clearer as the timing of a Summit and the internal U.S. position emerge.

CC:

G - Mr. Merchant
S/P - Mr. Owen
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